

# The Washington Post

THURSDAY, AUGUST 3, 1972

## A Primer for Dr. Scott

If the class will please come to attention, the lesson today has to do with Hugh J. Scott who is superintendent of our city's public schools. It is a big job so he is important. He lives in a nice house and there is a school called Murch where all the boys and girls in his neighborhood are supposed to go if they go to public school. But Dr. Scott saw another public school that he liked better and he fixed it up so his boy could go there instead. It was easy because the people who work for him knew he was important. But other people got mad about it and said it wasn't fair. They said he should know better.

And he should have. At least now he has finally recognized that a superintendent of schools cannot expect much public sympathy when he attempts to circumvent his own system's rules for private purposes—using a flimsy explanation about “hardship.” However strongly Dr. Scott may feel about the personal nature of his case, it demonstrated an incredible lack of feeling for the responsibility and posture befitting a person of his public rank.

The superintendent knew the rules about school attendance zones and, as he put it, made a request to enroll his son in another school outside of his zone “in accordance with established guidelines and procedures.” He calculated that he could request an exception to the rules on the basis of “severe hardship,” because he lives five blocks closer to Lafayette School than to Murch, and be-

cause the walk to Lafayette is “much safer” for a 5-year-old.

Instead of publicly questioning the way boundaries have been drawn, Dr. Scott merely submitted a letter to a subordinate, the assistant superintendent for elementary education, requesting a waiver. “I would appreciate your favorable consideration of this request,” wrote the *superintendent* to the *assistant superintendent*, signing it, “Hugh J. Scott, Superintendent of Schools.” Well—guess what?—the request from the boss was approved.

But when this arrangement was made public in a report by Washington Post staff writer Andrew Barnes, the reaction of less-privileged parents was obvious to almost everyone but Dr. Scott. As Tish Gardner, president of the Murch Home and School Association put it, the conclusion to be drawn was that “if you have the clout, you use it, and if you don't, you go to the school you were intended to.”

Now that Dr. Scott has reconsidered and is sending his son to Murch, we would like to believe that he realizes his error. But his statement certainly didn't reflect it. He said he was switching back to Murch “rather than subject my family to the harassment that has grown in the wake of publicity over this issue.” We're only sorry that Dr. Scott's young son had to become an issue and we wish him well as he joins the other first-graders at Murch in the fall.









*William Raspberry*

## People in Glass Houses

JULIUS HOBSON has taken D.C. School Supt. Hugh J. Scott to task—and to court—for Scott's efforts to get his son enrolled in an out-of-zone school.

Now it develops that Hobson's teen-age daughter has been attending an out-of-zone school for the past three years, including one year—1969—when Hobson was a member of the board of education.

There's no suggestion of hanky-panky in the transfer. It's more a case of people in glass houses. It was Hobson's District Court suit that led to the abolition of open enrollment. And it was pressure from Hobson that, pre-

sumably, led Dr. Scott to drop his transfer request.

Hobson denies that he had any role in getting his daughter enrolled in Paul Junior High at 8th and Oglethorpe Streets NW, instead of Backus, in Northeast, where she should have been assigned. She had attended an out-of-zone elementary school as well—Whittier instead of Bunker Hill.

The girl, now 15, lives with her mother (both parents have remarried) near the District Line in Northeast Washington.

Both Hobson and his former wife, Carol Smith, insist there was nothing particularly unusual about the transfer.

"WE LISTED the reason for the request as 'general hardship of the child,'" Mrs. Smith said. "I'm a working mother; I do not have a housekeeper, and there's no one at home when Jean gets out of school. We have made arrangements with an old family friend to keep her until I can pick her up; the friend lives near Paul. That's the basis on which the original transfer to Whittier was approved, and that's the basis for her assignment to Paul."

Some Washingtonians, apparently disgruntled over their inability to have their own children transferred to schools of their choosing, have been calling school board officials and newspapers to complain of the Hobson case. They have been complaining that his daughter has been transferred from Northeast Washington all the way across town to west-of-the-park Alice Deal, a piece of misinformation traceable to Hobson himself, who said in a recent interview with Post reporters that his daughter was at Deal.

This week Hobson acknowledged that his daughter is attending school out of zone, although he says the whole thing is academic now: She'll be going to Catholic high school this fall.

"Go ahead and print it though," he said. "It might help Scott."

As a matter of fact, but for his attack on Scott's transfer request — subse-

quently withdrawn—there would be no story in his daughter's transfer: It's too commonplace.

School officials won't even try to guess the number of out-of-zone students in the school system. But they acknowledge that several of them are sons and daughters of members of the board of education.

Board members Evie Washington and James Coates, for instance, have children attending school outside their attendance zones, according to school officials.

Again there is no suggestion of illegality: Their reasons seem no better nor worse than the reasons cited by ordinary parents in their transfer requests.

What makes the Scott case newsworthy is the fact that he is superintendent of schools. And what makes the Hobson case newsworthy is the fact that it was his suit that led to the more rigid adherence to the zone boundaries and the fact that he has been so unrelenting in his attack on Scott.

HIS BRASH attacks on those who seek to circumvent the court orders for which he was largely responsible may be the reason so many people appear to be delighted that Hobson has been caught in this bit of philosophical inconsistency—even if he wasn't directly involved in his daughter's transfer.

Former school board member Edward Hancock seemed far from dismayed to learn that Hobson is under fire. Judge J. Skelly Wright's 1967 decree, for which Hobson was responsible, forced Hancock to take his daughter out of Gordon Junior High in Georgetown, where it was legitimate for her to be under the old rules, and enroll her in Evans, far out East Capitol Street, where the new attendance charts said she had to go.

"I'm the only school board member who's abided by all the rules," he told a reporter yesterday. Then he sounded a note one hears from disgruntled parents all over town:

"Julius Hobson personally put my daughter out of Gordon," he said.







FRIDAY, JULY 28, 1972

## Scott Alters School Shift Plan for Son

By Andrew Barnes  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Washington School Supt. Hugh J. Scott will send his son to Murch School after all as a result of the "harassment" that has grown in the wake of publicity about his planned switch across boundary lines to Lafayette School.

In a press release issued yesterday, Scott said he had reconsidered the matter with his wife, and hoped that now "our personal lives can return to normal."

It was reported last week that Scott, in a June 16 letter to one of his assistants superintendents, had said it would be a "severe hardship" to send his son Hugh Jason 15 blocks to Murch instead of 10 blocks to Lafayette.

The Scotts live at 5426 27th St. NW, just within the Murch boundary. Scott explained last week he felt the boundary was illogical.

Since then he has been called before the personnel committee of the school board, where member Albert A. Rosenfield said "I warned him about the fact that there was going to be an upheaval."

Rosenfield said he sympathized with Scott's decision to make an exception to the rules, but felt he was wrong in doing so.

Julius Hobson asked the U.S. District Court to find that the switch is a violation of its order equalizing expenditures.

In his statement Scott defends the transfer as "in compliance with established criteria" and violating no policy. "Moreover, my request is similar to hundreds of others that have been approved."

Scott's June 16 letter said his son would be entering first grade next fall. The public information office said yesterday it would be kindergarten. The 5-year-old is not a junior, since his name is Hugh Jason and his father's name is Huge Jerome.

Scott emphasized again yesterday that the switch intended no slight to either school.

"There is no educational advantage to be gained by a transfer from Murch to Lafayette."

"Both schools have excellent programs and very competent staffs. I expressed my concern as any father would for his child's safety."

## Scott Revokes School Shift

D.C. School Supt. Hugh J. Scott has decided to send his son to Murch School after all as a result of "harassment" that followed publicity of his plans to send him across boundary lines to Lafayette School.

Details on Page C3.







# Son's School Transfer Is Dropped by Scott

By LYNN DUNSON  
Star-News Staff Writer

The 5-year-old son of D.C. School Supt. Hugh J. Scott will attend kindergarten at Murch Elementary School in the fall.

In the wake of mounting criticism, Scott yesterday announced that he would not send his son to Lafayette school under an exemption granted by the assistant superintendent for elementary education.

Charging that Scott was setting a "bad example," Julius Hobson filed a suit Wednesday, charging that the transfer would violate a 1967 U.S. Court of Appeals decision which abolished optional attendance boundaries.

AT THAT TIME, the court reasoned that the boundaries were used to discriminate against the black and the poor.

Shortly after Scott's reversal yesterday, Hobson said he would stop the court case as soon as he had proof that the boy was attending Murch.

"I have absolutely no desire to get hung up in a court fight with Scott over where he's going to send his little boy to decide he is going to abide school," Hobson said. "If he by the law, I will be happy to withdraw my suit."

In yesterday's statement, Scott explained that he shifted positions "rather than subject my family to the harassment that has grown in the wake of publicity over this issue."

HE SAID HE had requested the transfer because his son had to walk farther and across busy streets to get to Murch.

Scott's transfer plans prompted criticism from some board members while others felt that the issue was of minor importance.

However, Hobson, a frequent critic of the school system, said that the superintendent's action "would open the doors for others to follow his lead."

The Evening Star  
and  
The Washington News

WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, JULY 28, 1972

WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, JULY 27, 1972

## Scott Yields on Son

By DAVID HOLMBERG  
Star-News Staff Writer

District School Supt. Dr. Hugh Scott said today he would abandon his attempt to get an attendance exemption to enable his 5-year-old son to attend kindergarten at Lafayette Elementary School rather than Murch School.

The superintendent's effort to get the transfer has drawn strong criticism from former school board member Julius Hobson and from several current members of the board.

Hobson claimed such a transfer would violate a 1967 U.S. Court of Appeals decision that abolished optional attendance boundaries and the automatic right of parents to send children to public schools of their choice.

SCOTT SAID in a statement today that "after reconsidering the matter (of the transfer) with my wife, I have decided to enroll my son in Murch Elementary School rather than subject my family to the harassment that has grown in the wake of publicity over this issue."

"Hopefully," the superintendent added, "our personal lives can return to normal as a result of this decision."

He said that "I've always tried to separate my personal life from my professional life in order to maintain privacy in my relationship with my family."

The superintendent noted—as he has before in responding to critics of the attempted transfer—that he had sought the transfer because Lafayette is closer to the Scott home and his son's attendance at Murch would expose him to "hazardous" traffic.

"I made the request because I believed then and now that for my son to attend Murch Elementary School within the boundary would impose a hardship. Attending Murch would require him to



HUGH SCOTT

walk a longer distance which would expose him to traffic conditions hazardous to a five-year-old.

"My residence is considerably closer to Lafayette Elementary School and the travel route to the latter is much safer."

The superintendent said that the request for a transfer was made "in accordance with established guidelines and procedures and violated no policy. Moreover, my request was similar to hundreds of others that have been approved by the offices of elementary and secondary education."

"There is no educational advantage to be gained by transfer from Murch to Lafayette. Both schools have excellent

programs and very competent staffs. I express my concern as any father would for his child's safety."

Lafayette is considered one of the best elementary schools in the city, but a recent check of standardized scores in math and reading showed only a minimal difference between Lafayette and Murch youngsters.

Hobson said yesterday he would take legal action against the transfer because he (Scott) "is the superintendent and because he is setting a bad example."

The 1967 decision, by Judge J. Skelley Wright, was based on the rationale that optional boundaries had been used as a means of perpetuating racial and economic discrimination. Hobson was a plaintiff in the case that resulted in Wright's ruling.

Some critics also claimed that the distance from his home to Murch was not the real reason for Scott's request for a transfer.

Said one city official: "It is generally known that the real reason he requested it is because he wants his son to go to the better school."

Among those opposing the transfer, besides Hobson, have been school board members Albert Rosenfield, Charles I. Cassell and Bardyl R. Tirana.

Tirana termed the transfer "a bit ridiculous," and Cassell echoed Hobson's view that it would "set a bad example." He said such a transfer might prompt similar requests from other parents.

Cassell said he had received several telephone calls from parents complaining about the move. Vincent Reed, assistant superintendent for secondary education, said he also received a number of complaining calls, some from "persons high up." He declined to name the callers.







# Washington Post

Times Herald

THURSDAY, JULY 27, 1972

Phone 223-6000

## Scott Transfer Goes to Court

By Richard E. Prince  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Julius W. Hobson asked U.S. District Court here yesterday to find Washington School Supt. Hugh J. Scott in violation of court order by having his 5-year-old son transferred across school attendance zones.

Hobson claimed Scott violated the 1967 J. Skelly Wright decree, which abolished optional attendance zones here under which parents could send their children to the public schools of their choice. The court said the optional system perpetuated the privilege of the white and affluent.

Hobson, the antiestablishment gadfly who once served on the D.C. school board, brought the original 1967 suit.

Scott, who lives at 5426 27th St. NW, received permission

from his subordinates to have his son, Hugh Jason, transferred from Murch School, 15 blocks away from the Scott home, to Lafayette School, 10 blocks away. Scott lives in the Murch school zone.

Scott claimed it would be a "hardship" for his child to attend Murch because going to that school would mean young Hugh would have to walk along Military Road, which lacks curbs at some spots. He said there were no other children in the neighborhood who could accompany the child to his first-grade class there.

Albert A. Rosenfield, who represents the area covering both Lafayette and Murch on the D.C. School Board, called Scott's action stupid. Hobson, in the "suggestion of violation" he filed yesterday, said the transfer was effected "without valid reason."

Hobson, wearing crutches and looking more frail than usual, made his disclosure at a press conference yesterday at the District Building. He is suffering from myeloma, an incurable bone disease.

"He is the main officer in the city school system," Hobson said of Scott, "and he has to uphold the letter and the spirit of the law." The law is being violated, Hobson said in his court papers, because Scott has "in effect recreated optional zones in the D.C. public schools."

Hobson said later he wanted the court to order Scott to transfer his child back to Murch, "and if it were possible, to order him to read the law."

Indications from the D.C. school board yesterday were that the issue would not be raised there.

Board President Marion Barry said he didn't think Scott's action violated the Wright decree, but rather comes under the jurisdiction of school board policy.

"I've been so busy being concerned with the quality of education at the local school level," Barry said, "that I haven't gotten involved with the transfer of Dr. Scott's son."

Vice President Mattie Taylor said she deplored the "trauma" the attention might cause Scott's son.

The Rev. Raymond B. Kemp, another board member, said Scott could have asked the board to redraw the boundary lines, and member Charles Cassell said he feared Scott's action would cause a deluge in applications for exemptions from other parents.







# The Evening Star

and

## The Washington News

CROSBY N. BOYD, *Chairman of the Board*

JOHN H. KAUFFMANN, *President*

NEWBOLD NOYES, *Editor*

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 1972

### Scott's 'Hardship' Case

Two things were grievously wrong with Superintendent Hugh J. Scott's decision to have his five-year-old son enrolled at the Lafayette Elementary School rather than at the Murch School which is more distant from the Scott residence in Northwest Washington.

The transfer, on the face of it, violates a residential attendance-zone rule which — except in cases of extreme personal hardship — is rigidly adhered to by the school administration Scott heads.

But the more serious aspect of Scott's action is that it invites the cynical conclusion that such rules are meant to apply only to ordinary people, not to especially privileged families such as the superintendent's. And that is the sort of conclusion that Scott, who is trying to build his credibility as a dedicated, responsible leader, needs least of all at this stage of his brief, hectic career here.

Scott, in his defense, insists that he put his "hardship" request through administrative channels just as any other parent would. What those channels amounted to, though, were a submission to one of his own chief subordinates, signed by the "Superintendent of Schools," noting that "I would sincerely appreciate your favorable consideration of this request." How in the world does Scott expect other parents — some of

whom would dearly love to have attendance zones waived for their children under similar circumstances — to assess the objectivity of the superintendent's exemption?

Actually, were it not for Scott's position, we would have a good bit of sympathy for his complaint. While Lafayette and Murch are both excellent schools, the vagaries of attendance zoning would require Scott's son to travel 15 blocks (to Murch) rather than 10 blocks (to Lafayette), and cross two major traffic arteries in the process. To the superintendent this is "illogical," and indeed we agree that proximity of school to home ought to be the first, top-priority basis of school assignments.

But the point is, as a number of parents are hastening to note, that they, despite similar protestations, have been stuck with the rules.

We would like to think that this incident might stimulate a closer look at attendance zones throughout the city by the administration and the school board. If the Lafayette-Murch zone is not changed, however, Scott is obliged above everyone else to abide by the rules as they stand. And his complaint that, as superintendent, "I suffer enough hardships" already, will hardly gain him any brownie points with anyone.







# Hobson Raps Scott

## HOBSON



JULIUS HOBSON

By LYNN DUNSON  
Star-News Staff Writer

Julius Hobson, a persistent critic of the D.C. public school system and a former school board member, says he will take legal action against a transfer that would permit Supt. Hugh Scott's son to attend what is generally considered the city's best elementary school.

"It's a clear, pure and unadulterated violation of the decision," Hobson said yesterday. He was referring to the 1967 decision by Judge J. Skelley Wright of the U.S. Court of Appeals that abolished optional attendance boundaries and the automatic right of parents to send children to public schools of their choice.

The Wright decision was based on the rationale that optional boundaries had been used as a means of perpetuating racial and economic discrimination.

"I am only doing it (taking action) be-

cause he is the superintendent and because he is setting a bad example," Hobson said. Hobson was the plaintiff in the case that resulted in Wright's landmark ruling. He was to file suit today in U.S. District Court.

SCOTT'S EFFORT to get an attendance exemption for his 5-year-old son, Hugh Scott III, to attend kindergarten at Lafayette School rather than Murch Elementary School, which serves the District in which Scott lives, has drawn criticism from other board members.

While Lafayette consistently scores better on achievement tests than other city elementary schools, and is considered one of the best elementary schools, a check of recent standardized scores in math and reading showed only a minimal difference between

See HOBSON, Page B-4

B-4  
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Metro

THE EVENING STAR and DAILY NEWS  
Washington, D. C., Wednesday, July 26, 1972

# Hobson: Scott Action Hit

Continued From Page B-1  
Lafayette and Murch youngsters.

Scott said last week that he sought the change because his son would have to walk farther and cross busy streets to get to Murch, which he ordinarily would attend. Murch is 15 blocks away from the home and Lafayette is 10 blocks away.

Although the Scott home is within the Murch district, his home is closer to Lafayette, Scott explained. And, there are no other children of his son's age in the neighborhood who would be walking to the Murch School, he said.

At a District Building press conference today, Hobson, said he believes Scott is not "maliciously trying to violate the law..."

"I WOULD BE KIND to him and say he did it out of pure and unadulterated ignorance," he said.

Hobson is working as a consultant with the Board of Education to insure that the school system reaches compliance with the Wright decision. He said he'd heard through an unnamed school board member that potential foundation support for the project may be undermined by his attack on Scott.

To avoid changes of conflict of interest Hobson said, he has refused to take any money from the school board in payment for the contract.

"The economic threat . . . matters a damn as far as I'm concerned," Hobson said. If necessary, he said, he would spend his own money to see the schools comply with the court decision.

Hobson also reported that Scott has asked to see him in his office today and he would attend the meeting, although he did not know what the subject of the discussion would be.

THE TRANSFER evoked the ire of board member Albert A. Rosenfield, who represents the well-to-do Ward 3 where both schools are located. Rosenfield was out of town yesterday and could not be reached for comment.

But Bardyl R. Tirana, an at-large board member who lives in Ward 3, said he agreed with Rosenfield and felt the transfer was "a bit ridiculous."

Another board member, Charles I. Cassell, maintained that Scott had "set a bad example."

"Might not the superintendent's actions prompt more re-

quests for out-of-zone transfers?" Cassell speculated. Cassell said he had received several telephone calls from parents complaining about the transfer.

VINCENT REED, assistant superintendent for secondary education, said he had received a number of complaints also, some from "persons high up." Reed would not name the callers.

The Rev. Raymond B. Kemp, a board member, didn't comment on Scott's action, but said he would "like to see the day when District schools have open admission," and parents could send children to any school they wished.

"What Scott's action does is open up that whole question of open admissions. If transfers do not make for immediate problems and if the school is not overcrowded parents should have the right to send their children to school in any part of the city," Kemp said.

However, board vice chairman Mattie E. Taylor said she had received two calls from persons "disturbed by so much attack on this little boy," Scott's son.

"NOBODY KNOWS the weight on a child of busy parents who are in public life," said Mrs. Taylor, who has a 9-year-old daughter in public school.

"It's absolutely barbaric. With his father as superintendent, little Hugh is going to have a hard enough time going to public school as it is."

Mrs. Taylor said she frequently supports parents seeking transfers for their children because "a parent's judgment should prevail because that parent knows his child better than" the school board or school administrators.

Scott followed normal procedure in seeking the zone exemption. He submitted a written request to his assistant superintendent for elementary education, Dr. Dorothy Johnson.

Exemptions are allowed if attendance at a particular school creates a hardship or interferes with proper day care. Scott pleaded hardship.

A check with the division of elementary education showed that 90 percent of 700 requests for out-of-zone transfers were granted this past school year. Only a bit more than 50 percent of the 1,639 requests at the secondary level were granted.







# Hobson Raps Scott

## HOBSON



JULIUS HOBSON

By LYNN DUNSON  
Star-News Staff Writer

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See HOBSON, Page B-6

## HOBSON

# Transfer of Scott's Son Hit

Continued From Page B-1  
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SATURDAY, JULY 22, 1972

## Scott's Son Shifted Outside School Zone

By Andrew Barnes  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Washington School Supt. Hugh J. Scott, citing the "severe hardship" of sending his son to first grade at Murch School next fall, has had him transferred across the boundary line to Lafayette School.

Scott's \$70,000 house at 5426 27th St. NW is just inside the Murch attendance zone, though it is 15 blocks from Murch and only 10 blocks from Lafayette.

Scott explained "it appeared to me a little illogical" to send Hugh Jason Scott, 5, the greater distance.

"Many kids are closer to Lafayette than they are to Murch," commented Tish Gardner, president of the Murch Home and School Association.

"I think it's a marvellous precedent," she said, and all schools would be better if parents could choose to send their children where they think best.

Parents used to have greater choice, but in 1967 the optional attendance zones were banned by the court on the grounds that they perpetuated the privilege of the white and the affluent.

"The boundaries are firm," said Roberta S. Barnes, principal of Lafayette until her retirement June 30. "Any deviations are decided at the Presidential Building (school headquarters)."

She said it is "very uncommon" for children to switch between Murch and Lafayette, both of which are among the richest, most prestigious and whitest public schools in the city.

Throughout the city, 716 transfers were granted last year, mostly for working parents to assist in day-care problems. Day-care and hardship are the two reasons to cross a boundary.

School board member Albert A. Rosenfield, who represents ward three, covering both Lafayette and Murch, called Scott's action "stupid."

He said he has already begun receiving calls from parents who have heard of the

See SCOTT, B4, Col. 4



By Joseph Mastrangelo—The Washington Post

Arrow points to Scott's home on 27th Street, located just outside Lafayette School zone (dotted line).

## Scott's Son Transferred Outside His School Zone

SCOTT, From B1

transfer, and showed a letter he has received from a family which has been seeking unsuccessfully to make a similar transfer.

"If you have the clout, you use it," said Mrs. Gardner, "and if you don't, you go to the school you were intended to."

"From a human point of view, I understand," she said. "They just plain are closer. But if you were the superintendent . . . it might even be a news story."

"I don't think I should be handicapped by being superintendent," said Scott. Asked whether he thought the assistant superintendent to whom he wrote the request signed "Hugh J. Scott, Superintendent of Schools" could be impartial in responding, Scott said "I thought I cited a good reason."

Scott said getting to Murch, located at 36th and Davenport Streets NW, from his house overlooking St. John's College High School would involve going along Military Road, which lacks curbs at some spots, while walking to Lafayette at Northampton Street and Broad Branch Road NW would be safe for a small child.

Scott said he had walked and driven the two routes himself to check them out.

In his letter Scott points out there are no other children in his neighborhood with whom his son could walk, and says it would "create a serious hardship for me to have to arrange to take my son to and from Murch School each day."

He concludes his letter to Assistant Superintendent Dorothy L. Johnson "I would sincerely appreciate your favorable consideration of this request."







The Evening Star

and  
The Washington  
Daily News

# Metro Life

WASHINGTON, D. C.

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 1972

## School Exception for Scott Son

By JOHN MATHEWS  
Star-News Staff Writer

Dr. Dorothy L. Johnson, the veteran assistant superintendent for elementary schools in Washington, was confronted recently with the type of problem that makes school administrators wish they were back in the classroom.

You see, Dr. Johnson received this letter from a parent asking that his 5-year-old son be allowed to attend kindergarten at Lafayette Elementary School, rather than Murch Elementary School, an equally prestigious District school in Upper Northwest.

The parent, who lives in a small residential pocket that should logically be in the Lafayette zone, but for at least 20 years has been assigned to Murch, said it would be an "extreme hardship" for his son to go to Murch because it is five blocks further away and he would have to cross such busy arteries as Connecticut Avenue and Military Road. Few exceptions have been granted in the past because Lafayette has been filled to capacity for years and Murch is under-enrolled.

WHEN DR. JOHNSON got to the end of the letter she must have done a doubletake when she saw the signature: "Hugh J. Scott, Superintendent of Schools," her boss.

Today, Dr. Johnson would not comment on her approval of the exception for Hugh Jason Scott Jr., except to say it was done through "normal channels." The superintendent, however, was ready to comment.

"I could have approved the change myself without going through channels," he said. "Furthermore, I don't think my son should be punished because I'm superintendent. I suffer enough hardships as it is."

Scott, who lives at 5426 27th St. NW, across from St. John's College High School, said the boundaries for Lafayette and Murch were "illogical." Instead of the boundary line for Lafayette continuing straight along Military, it jogs northward a couple of blocks to 27th Street. The result, he said, is that part of Lafayette is zoned into Murch, making that area the furthest distance from the Murch school.

THE SUPERINTENDENT said walking to Murch, 15 blocks away, would be more hazardous than to Lafayette, 10 blocks distant, because portions of Military Road have no sidewalks. He said his son is not "street wise" and would have no children his age to walk to school with this year or apparently in the future.

The former principal of Lafayette, Mrs. Roberta S. Barnes, who retired June 30 after 46 years in the school system and 14 years as the school's principal, could not recall any exceptions granted in the past for residents of the attendance pocket where Scott lives. She noted that a similar pocket exists near Connecticut and Military, although the distance to Murch is not as great from that area.

Mrs. Barnes said she was not consulted about the exception for the Scott child. "All those decisions are made at the Presidential Building (school headquarters)," she said.

Scott's other child, Marvalisa, 16, will be a senior at Wilson High School this fall, the zoned high school for the neighborhood.







## PTA HEAD DISAPPOINTED

# Scott's Action Deplored

By JOHN MATHEWS  
Star-News Staff Writer

"You know, we look to Dr. Scott for leadership and in this case I'm very disappointed in him," said Mrs. Tish Gardiner, president of the Murch Elementary School PTA.

She was reacting to the public disclosure that District School Supt. Hugh J. Scott has had his 5-year-old son Hugh Jason transferred from Murch to Lafayette, citing "extreme hardship" as the reason for the special exception to boundary lines.

"There's no rivalry or bitterness between the two schools; they're both excellent schools," said Mrs. Gardiner. "But, we have done much to comply with equalization between schools and this kind of special treatment was, I thought, something we were trying to keep away from."

Yesterday, Scott maintained he had not exerted any pressure on his subordinate, Dr. Dorothy L. Johnson, the veteran assistant superintendent for elementary schools, who approved the attendance-zone exception for his son. The superintendent said he "went through normal channels," sending Dr. Johnson a letter

he signed: "Hugh J. Scott, Superintendent of Schools."

In his letter for an exception, Scott said his home at 5426 27th St. NW, was 10 blocks from Lafayette, but 15 blocks from Murch. In order to get to Murch, his son in future years, when he would regularly walk to school, would have to cross busy Military Road, which has no sidewalks in some spots, and Connecticut Avenue.

YOUNG HUGH, who will enter kindergarten in the fall, has no children in the neighborhood with whom he could walk to Lafayette and is not "street wise," the superintendent said.

Scott added that the boundary lines between the schools—which he could have ordered changed on his own authority to aid his child—are "illogical." Instead of the southernmost line of Lafayette adhering to Military Road, it takes a northward jog near the Scott home which is opposite St. John's College High School, cutting the small area out of the Lafayette zone.

As a result, Scott pointed out, his home is at the furthest point from Murch. If it were in the Lafayette zone, ironically,

it would also be the furthest point from that school.

A similar jog that zones children into Murch instead of Lafayette occurs near the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Military Road. A parent who lives in that area said, "We're even closer to Lafayette than Dr. Scott, although we're also closer to Murch, but we aren't complaining, because it wouldn't do any good."

ANOTHER PARENT, who insisted on not being identified, said parents in the Lafayette zone have "kept their fingers crossed for years," and used some "clout" behind the scenes to make sure the boundaries remain the same, which they have been for more than 20 years.

Lafayette, which regularly rates the highest among District schools in test scores, is very much a community school with a strong, possessive parent body from the idle and upper middle class neighborhood. Murch is an equally high achievement school, but with less of a neighborhood identity, largely because children attend the school from both sides of Connecticut Avenue.

Since both schools have

usually been near capacity—although Murch currently has more space than Lafayette—neither has had an influx of out of the neighborhood children, despite the terms of the Wright court decision, which provided for voluntary busing of children from overcrowded schools in Southeast Washington.

Scott said yesterday that 716 exceptions were granted last school year to parents seeking attendance of their children at out of zone schools.

Mrs. Gardiner, the Murch PTA president, recalled that one parent "who had some influence with the school administration" got an exception last year so his child could attend Lafayette School. Mrs. Roberta S. Barnes, who retired June 30 after 14 years as the Lafayette principal and 46 years in the school system, could not remember any exception in the past for children from the pocket where Scott lives. Decisions on exceptions are made by school board headquarters, she added.

Scott summed up his position, saying, "I don't think my son should be punished because I'm superintendent. I suffer enough hardships as it is."







HOBSON AND SCOTT

When you have an organization, such as the D.C. School system, spending more than 140 million dollars a year, that's big business.

And no one is more aware of that than Julius Hobson.

The past years have seen him in and out of court demanding and getting changes in the way that money is being spent. Now, he's preparing to return to court charging the system with failing to carry out an earlier order to equalize funds spent in each school.

If Hobson tends to view education in terms of dollars and cents, it's because he believes money is a basic ingredient of quality teaching. And upgrading schools, he feels, is more important to the youngsters than ensuring a racial mix.

We share his concern over the apparent lack of fiscal expertise in the school system. The recent budget crisis revealed a disturbing loss of control over all those millions of dollars. It also revealed that Superintendent Scott resents having to play head bookkeeper when there is so much educating to be done.

Hobson says he'll ask the court to appoint a "master" to run the schools. We would hate to see the court getting more deeply involved than it is, but the idea of someone empowered to handle the business end of schooling is worth considering. Scott could then revert to the role of educator and the taxpayers would know where the money went.

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